

my neck in crossing it; but no matter, as it only remains for me to march onward I will march."

Besides the tales already enumerated, Zola's first volume, which opened with a glowing dedication to Ninon, the ideal love of his youth, — some passages being inspired, however, by the ripper knowledge that had come to him from the more material love of Bohemian days, — included "Les Aventures du Grand Sidoine et du Petit Mdd^eric," an entertaining fable of a giant and his tiny brother. Zola had sent his manuscript to M. Hetzel, then associated in business with M. Albert Lacroix, a scholarly man of letters who, a little later, founded the well-known Librairie Internationale and published several of the works of Victor Hugo: in return for which the great poet, whose own books were profitable, virtually compelled M. Lacroix to issue the works of his sons and his hangers-on, with the result that heavy losses frequently occurred.

Hetzel and Lacroix agreed to publish Zola's tales (under the collective title. of "Contes a Ninon") without exacting anything for the cost of production; but the author was to receive no immediate payment. He, all eagerness to see his work in book-form, subscribed to every condition that was enunciated, and then ran home to tell his mother the good news. The volume was issued on

October 24,
1864,¹ which became a red letter day in Zola's
life. Writing
to Valabrègue in the following January, he told
him that
more than half of the first edition (probably one
of fifteen
hundred copies) was then sold; and as the
book at least
made him known, procured him journalistic
and literary

¹ Fo date appears on the title of the first edition (18mo, 3
francs), which
"bears the imprints of Hetzel and Lacroix, and Poupart-Davyl
& Co., Printers.